

## OPINION

# Opinion: ‘Dooring’ shouldn’t worry only cyclists. Drivers need to prevent it too



Yasmine Nasser Diaz pours water on the ghost bike vigil in the memory of her husband, Robert George, a cyclist killed in Los Angeles after a “dooring” incident. (Michael Blackshire / Los Angeles Times)

BY PAUL THORNTON | LETTERS EDITOR

DEC. 23, 2023 3 AM PT

If you didn't know about "dooring," now you do. Many drivers don't give a second thought to flinging open their door after they park on the street, but as [The Times' recent article on the terror, injuries and death inflicted on cyclists](#) by car doors suddenly shoved into their path, they certainly should.

On a personal level, the timing of this piece is impeccable. Heading home from work on Monday night, while riding north on Figueroa Street by USC, a driver pulled into the bike lane right in front of me and stopped (his first dangerous mistake), and then nearly hit me with his door (his second dangerous mistake) as I maneuvered around his car. The next day, on Tuesday, Times reporting fellow Angie Orellana Hernandez's article appeared.

"Dooring" happens, and cyclists shouldn't be the only ones aware of it.

-----

**To the editor:** I was painfully "doored" in 2022 while riding in a single-file line of brightly garbed cyclists on a Sunday afternoon. We were on Washington Boulevard close to the Venice Pier parking lot, where the beach bike path begins. A line of cars was inching alongside us, waiting to enter the parking lot.

Without warning, a young woman flung open the right rear door of a stopped car, sending me and my bike tumbling over violently into the metal fence that protected an outdoor dining area.

After getting up with a wrenched shoulder, some painful scrapes and bruises and a bloody, torn shirt, I confronted the woman with the obvious question: "Why didn't you look before opening the door? There was a whole line of cyclists right outside your car. Didn't you see us?"

Her response almost floored me again. She said she didn't look because her dad, the driver, told her to get out of the car.

Drivers need to take note of what's around them or coming up alongside their vehicles when they see bicycles on the road. They should tell their passengers when it's safe to open the door.

*Shel Erlich, Santa Monica*

..

**To the editor:** It is sad that cyclists are getting injured and even killed in “dooring” collisions, but the idea that bicycle lanes should be put on every busy street isn't a good one. Why not require bicyclists to use streets that are a block away in residential areas?

At any given time on a busy street, I rarely see more than one rider at a time in bike lanes. Yet a whole lane is removed from vehicle use for a few riders.

Bike riding on residential streets would be much safer and easier.

*Marcia Jacobs, Culver City*

..

**To the editor:** I have been a bike commuter in Santa Barbara for more than 50 years and have gotten the “door prize” only once.

Fortunately, I was hit only by the door and not the car behind me. The driver who opened the door on me was in a hurry. He was at work delivering food to a boutique hotel.

Even when there is a painted bike lane next to parking, I ride a bit into the street to get away from car doors. Drivers behind me will sometimes honk and scream profanities at me.

Sometimes, a driver yells at me, speeds by and then slams on the brakes at the stop sign 25 feet away. I pull up next to the driver and offer a perplexed facial expression, because I practice road-rage avoidance.

Can't we all slow down a bit?

*Daniel Diamond, Santa Barbara*

..

**To the editor:** Your article reminded me of a case over which I presided as a judge in the Santa Monica courthouse several years ago.

A young woman was riding within a bike lane, wearing a helmet and highly visible clothing, proceeding in the proper direction on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood. A driver opened his door, "dooring" the cyclist and causing her to fall into the street.

She testified that while lying in the street she thought of how fortunate she was to not have been injured, whereupon another car ran over her arm, causing serious and permanent injuries.

*Joe Hilberman, Westwood*

..

**To the editor:** Your illustration of protected bike lanes on the right of parked cars shows the absurdity of forcing the square pegs of bike lanes into the round holes of existing streets.

This is clearly out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. A wheelchair not only must navigate right through the bike lane to get to the passenger door, but as your illustration shows, the bollards often block the wheelchair from reaching the car and fully opening the door.

Also, passengers exiting a car must go into the bike line. This actually happened to me in Long Beach in this identical setup: After dinner, I opened the passenger door for my wife and was almost hit by a speeding cyclist who yelled at us to get out of the bike lane.

I didn't have time to reply that I was being forced by design to walk through and stand in the bike lane. I guess the solution for cars is "no passengers allowed."

*Kirk Jordan, Long Beach*



Paul Thornton

Paul Thornton is the Los Angeles Times' letters editor.